

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 1924-24

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 15, 2024

RE: S.C.R. No. 178

Honorable Scott K. Saiki  
Speaker, House of Representatives  
Thirty-Second State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2024  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems, to which was referred S.C.R. No. 178 entitled:

"SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION URGING THE STATE TO PROHIBIT THE INTRODUCTION OF BIOCONTROL AGENTS THAT MIGHT THREATEN ECONOMICALLY IMPORTANT FORAGE GRASS SPECIES,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to urge the State to:

- (1) Prohibit the introduction of biocontrol agents that might threaten economically important forage grass species; and
- (2) Provide for the protection of Hawai'i's rangelands and important forage grass species that sustain beef cattle production through funding policies, initiatives, and directives to state agencies to incentivize livestock grazing for the management of forage grasses and other vegetation on lands managed by the State and private sector that are currently undermanaged.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Agriculture; Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; Kapapala Ranch; Larry Jefts Farms, LLC; and four individuals.

SCR178 HSCR AGR

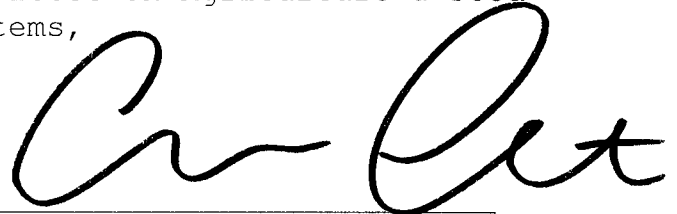


Your Committee received testimony in opposition from the Department of Land and Natural Resources and three individuals.

Your Committee finds that Hawai'i's beef cattle industry is a major agricultural sector, contributing over \$48,000,000 to the state economy annually through job creation, taxes, and the sale of animals and meat products, while also improving the State's food security. Ranchers provide vital ecosystem services such as soil stabilization, watershed capacity enhancement, carbon sequestration, nutrient cycling, and noxious weed suppression. Your Committee further finds that the local beef cattle industry relies on intentionally introduced forage grasses that are essential for feeding communities across the islands and providing manageable and sustainable ground cover, but these grasses are increasingly being labeled as invasive and targeted for eradication without considering the adverse impact on ranchers and their stewardship role. This measure supports the effort to prevent the eradication of these grasses to sustain beef cattle production in the State.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems that is attached to this report, your Committee concurs with the intent and purpose of S.C.R. No. 178 and recommends its adoption.

Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Agriculture & Food  
Systems,



CEDRIC ASUEGA GATES, Chair



**Record of Votes of the Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems**

Bill/Resolution No.: <i>SCR 178</i>	Committee Referral: <i>AGR</i>	Date: <i>04/12/2024</i>
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The committee is reconsidering its previous decision on the measure.

The recommendation is to:  Pass, unamended (as is)     Pass, with amendments (HD)     Hold  
 Pass short form bill with HD to recommit for future public hearing (recommit)

AGR Members	Ayes	Ayes (WR)	Nays	Excused
1. GATES, Cedric Asuega (C)	✓			
2. KAHALOA, Kirstin (VC)	✓			
3. COCHRAN, Elle				✓
4. LOWEN, Nicole E.		✓		
5. PERRUSO, Amy A.		✓		
6. WOODSON, Justin H.				✓
7. WARD, Gene				✓
<b>TOTAL (7)</b>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>		<i>3</i>

The recommendation is:  Adopted     Not Adopted  
 If joint referral, \_\_\_\_\_ did not support recommendation.  
committee acronym(s)

Vice Chair's or designee's signature: *[Signature]*